



JENNIFER M. GRANHOLM
GOVERNOR

STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR & ECONOMIC GROWTH
LANSING

STANLEY PRUSS
DIRECTOR

Michigan Commission on Spanish Speaking Affairs
Van Buren Intermediate School District, Distance Learning Lab
250 South Street
Lawrence, Michigan 49064

July 30, 2010
Meeting Minutes No. 277

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairperson Lawrence García called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m.

Commissioners Present: Lawrence García, Olga Hernández-Patino, Art Luna, Gil Guzman, Art Reyes, Mike Ramírez, Leonard Savala, Maria Elena Rodríguez, Fred Feliciano, Rick García

Excused Absence:, Benjamin Inquilla, Alicia Villarreal, Debra Ehrmann, Michael Espinoza

Staff Present: Marylou Mason, Victoria García

II. Introduction of Commissioners

Commissioners and staff introduced themselves.

III. Welcoming Remarks

Mr. Pedro Martinez welcomed the Commission.

IV. Approval of Absences:

MOTION: Commissioner Ramirez motioned to approve the absences of Commissioner Inquilla, Ehrmann, Espinoza and Villarreal. Commissioner Arminda Garcia resigned. Commissioner Hernandez-Patino supported the motion. Motion carried.

V. Approval of Agenda

MOTION: Commissioner Luna motioned to approve the agenda of July 30, 2010. Commissioner Reyes supported the motion. Motion carried.

VI. Approval of Minutes

MOTION: Commissioner Guzman motioned to approve the minutes of June 4, 2010. Commissioner Garcia supported the motion. Motion carried.

VII. Public Forum

Pedro Martinez, Administrator, International Partnerships & Summer Migrant Education Programs:

Mr. Martinez invited the Commission to an event called FIESTA that will be held on August 8, 2010 at the Conference Center, Van Buren Intermediate School District, 6:00pm. The program includes a ballet folklorico, food, music and various other activities. It is an appreciation dinner for parents, students, staff and community leaders.

On August 5, 2010, the migrant student program entitled Project NOMAD will be attending a Detroit Tigers game. Additional complementary tickets are available if any Commissioners are interested in attending. Please contact Commissioner Guzman for tickets.

On August 11, 2010, they will be having a event to connect migrant families and leaders from the Kalamazoo community. For more information, please contact Commissioner Guzman or Mr. Martinez for more information.

Mr. Martinez requested the Commission convey the needs of migrants in Michigan to the Governor's Office. He asked the Governor's Office to consider the establishment of a one-stop migrant community welcome center that addresses all the needs of these families (legal, health, workforce development, education, and training) He added that the Van Buren area is the highest influx of migrant families in the state. They average approximately 1500 students for the summer program. They partnership with many community agencies but they still fail to adequately meet all the needs of the migrant families. They currently work closely with Dept. of Agriculture, Dept. of Human Services Dept. of Energy, Labor and Economic Growth/COSSA and Dept. of Education. The one-stop center could operate year around and not only serve migrants during the summer months but all Hispanics families.

Commissioner Ramirez inquired if a survey has been conducted to see what the needs are. Mr. Martinez stated not that he was aware of but he felt it would be a good idea.

Commissioner Guzman stated their Superintendent is very committed to their program and the migrant community. Superintendent was present before the meeting to meet with Commissioners and staff as he had a prior commitment and couldn't stay. He described a program that is currently in operation in Hope, Arkansas. Migrants from Texas stop at the center in Hope as a rest-stop because they have hotel facilities, a kitchen, and everything they need. The center asks for a donation but it is not mandatory. This center faxes their program information on families that are coming to their area and what farm. Once the family arrives, their recruiters then looks for that family to assist them with their needs.

Superintendent Jeff Mills said in order for this venture to be successful, they need the support of the farmers and the local community. As far as he knows, the farmers are supportive at this time. In the past, this proposal was not successful because the farms and community did not support it.

Chairman García asked what office holder would be most receptive in Lansing for the greatest chance success. Mr. Martinez stated it would depend on the outcome of the upcoming elections. Mr. Pedro Martinez stated two of the main state departments would be Dept. of Education, Dept. of Agriculture and Dept of Energy, Labor & Economic Growth.

Chairman García stated that he believes the Commission can assist them in identifying the state departments that can assist them in pushing forward to their goal of having a one-stop migrant center. He stated he will follow-up with Commissioner Guzman.

Mr. Martinez introduced Mr. Ruben Martinez who is a Parent Advisor Coordinator (PAC Leader) for migrant families.

Mr. Ruben Martinez, PAC Leader: Mr. Martinez thanked the Commission for meeting in their area. He stated the migrant student parents are very dedicated to their jobs. The migrants are working from 9:00am-9:00pm on a daily basis through the summer. They hold formal PAC meetings right at the camps and provide dinner for them. At these meetings, they ask the families what their needs are. This summer they have accumulated over 55 surveys. Their needs include: daycare, food, healthcare, clothing, work, and English as a second language. This survey's are a sampling of a needs survey.

Carlos Sanchez, West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce: Mr. Sanchez presented a document to the Commission drafted by the Chamber and some Hispanic leaders in Kent and Ottawa Counties. The document is a letter in response to HB 6256 introduced by Rep. Kim Meltzer. The document is based on fact rather than emotions and is broken down into the areas of national security, economy, public and social services, employment, language, and access to citizenship. Mr. Sanchez is requesting the Commission's support the document or to draft its own document to submit to the Governor. Chairman García thanked Mr. Sanchez for the document and stated there will be additional discussion later in the meeting.

Leonard Savala, Commissioner, Presentation: Commissioner Savala presented eight students from the Natural Resources & Agriculture one-week program that is held at Michigan State University. He is hopeful these students will continue on to the six-week program which is the Multicultural Apprenticeship Program. Commissioner Savala presented and recognized each student with a certificate of completion. Mr. Torres, who accompanied Mr. Savala and students, announced each student as they received their award. Commissioner Hernandez-Patino congratulated each student and encouraged them to continue their education.

VIII. Executive Reports

- A. Chairperson's Report: Chairman García stated he would like to discuss the issue of immigration. The Hispanic Bar Association of Michigan prepared a letter regarding immigration that discusses the major concerns regarding the law here in Michigan. Issues include federalism – we have one federal law regarding boundaries in the US, one policy regarding enforcement and one agency the federal government that is responsible for enforcing those laws. When each of the states pursues its own ideas about immigration, that is anti-

American in regards to diversity. There should be one law. The most troubling piece about the law is the inherent discrimination that is involved in it because if you are reasonably suspecting people are here illegally, it's going to be based upon their appearance. Hispanics that are here illegally look just like Hispanics that are here legally. There is no way to enforce this law without playing off of those racial stereotypes and profiling. There is a bad allocation of resources when police, instead of protecting and serving, are going to become immigration officers. Many people are behind this law because people think that a Hispanic presence/immigrant presence detracts from jobs and economic activity here in the United States. Chairman García believes the opposite is true. Chairman García would like to discuss this further in New Business.

Chairman García acknowledged Commissioner Art Reyes and Director Mason for their participation at the National Council of La Raza Annual Conference in San Antonio, Texas.

Commissioner Reyes provided a one-page report on an area he thought was particularly important – the aspect of advocacy. He stated it was a great experience and great conference to attend. He stated he met a man who was a migrant worker growing up in California and last year was an astronaut. He has a very inspiring story and is a strong advocate of immigrant rights and farmworkers. He would be a great speaker for one of our future events in Michigan.

One of the workshops that Commissioner Reyes attended that he thought was very informative was *From Social Service to Social Change: Advocacy for Service Organizations*. The workshop focused on how to implement advocacy and engagement. Advocacy is a priority for NCLR. Commissioner Reyes had a follow-up conversation with Laren McArthur, Senior Manager for Capacity building at NCLR on some of the topics. Two of the other speakers are examples of agencies that have successfully intergraded advocacy and civic engagement into their day-to-day operations. He stated that while at the conference, he brought us that COSSA had a successful MI Hispanic Advocacy Day. Since the immigration copycat bill has been brought to Michigan, it is very important that we are able to engage our communities and individuals that our organizations work with in ways we can advocate on behalf of our community within the state of Michigan.

Chairman García stated he feels this illustrates what we have been talking about. He stated he feels there is not enough organization within the Hispanic community across the state to make the greatest use of the resources that we have. Having a national organization such as NCLR or USHLI reminds us there is a bigger movement that can pull together some of the smaller and local agencies and organizations. Additionally, the Hispanic community has challenges in being recognized as an ethnicity that is going to get a certain amount of political attention. In order to demand that type of consideration, we have to have the type of help from organizations like NCLR

to serve as a national banner to run under and also include as many of our own communities as we can.

Chairman García asked what were the defining characteristics of the Hispanic movement and if NCLR was able to draw individuals from all over the country, what were they talking about and what are the things that most integrally apart of what we should be focused on as Hispanics in Michigan?

Commissioner Reyes responded that there were several different issues discussed at the conference. He stated the main issues included: how we educate our communities, immigration reform, and how we unify our community to participate in the democratic process.

Commissioner Rodriguez added that we should look at what our peers are doing in other states. She stated they are very proactive and they step outside of the box to address issues.

Chairman García stated there has been some discussion of combining MI Hispanic Advocacy Day and Hispanic Heritage Month together as one event. He wants the event to be more successful that this year but the work should not fall exclusively on the shoulders of the office staff. He would like the labor to be more divided and to be more prepared than this year. There will be more discussion during old business.

B. Executive Director's Report:

Director Mason entertained any questions in reference to her written report.

Ms. Mason stated during the NCLR Conference, there was also a leadership conference going on for Hispanic youth. There were approximately 900 students in attendance. They had their own workshops but came together with the annual conference participants for lunch. The youth conference was held for a week and participants received academic/college credit for attending. Ms. Mason commented that it would be great to involve students in Michigan to attend for next year. The conference next year will be in Washington, D.C.

Ms. Mason stated at the conference, her and Commissioner Reyes met NASA Astronaut Jose Hernandez. He has a very inspiring story and indicated he would be a very interesting and powerful speaker for any upcoming events COSSA may host.

She bought a copy of the NCLR conference workshop handbook for review. There were so many workshops that they could not attend them all.

The Hispanic Entrepreneur of the Year Award (HEYA) form has been updated and needs approval. The award is presented during Hispanic Heritage Month so we need nominations.

SB 215 was sent back to the Senate because of the amendment and is up for vote on August 11, 2010. Commissioner Feliciano inquired what the amendment was. Ms. Mason stated the amendment was addition of the Hispanic event dates.

Ms. Mason stated it was important for the sub-committees to start working together again. She announced that the office received the resignation of Commissioner Arminda Garcia. Therefore, a new education chair needs to be appointed. Chairman García stated that with the impending passage of SB 215, we will be having fewer meetings. He doesn't feel it is very efficient to conduct its work only at Commission Meetings. The committees are the vehicle for working and completing our goals.

A draft copy of 2009 Annual Report is included in the meeting packet. Ms. Mason asked Commissioners to please review and advise of any necessary changes. A request was made for Vicky to please email to Commissioners.

Ms. Mason commented that since we are an affiliate of NCLR that we should use the NCLR affiliate logo. She will discuss the issue with Deputy Director Susan Corbin.

Ms. Mason reported that DELEG has a new acting director, Mr. Andy Levin, effective July 26, 2010.

Ms. Mason presented a recognition plaque to Chairman García from the Universidad Autonoma de Guadalajara. This was sent in thanks for the special resolution the Commission presented them a few month back.

IX. Committee Reports:

Economic Development: No report.

Education: No report.

Legislative & Civic Engagement: No report.

X. Old Business:

- 1) None

XI. New Business:

- 1) Immigration Reform in MI: Chairman García stated that Rep. Rashid Talib and other state representatives have actively demonstrated against HB 6256, introduced by Rep. Kim Meltzer, regarding immigration reform in Michigan. This bill mirrors the controversial Arizona immigration bill. Chairman García opened the discussion by asking what the Commission should do in response to this bill.

Commissioner Feliciano stated that when we weigh in, are we looked at as an independent entity or as a mouth piece as branch of government? What are the dynamics of COSSA taking an independent position on this bill? Commissioner Feliciano inquired about the position of the Executive Office on this issue.

Chairman García stated to his knowledge the Governor is opposed to this bill.

Chairman García reviewed the COSSA statute and stated that COSSA has the responsibility to report changes or recommendations to the Governor on state programs, statutes and policies. As well as advise the Governor and legislature of the nature, magnitude and problems of Hispanics in Michigan.

He stated that the individuals who stand to be most affected by this pending bill are undocumented individuals.

Commissioner Reyes stated the purpose of COSSA exists is to advocate on issues such as this bill. He feels COSSA is an accountability commission. This is one of the biggest issues affecting immigration that has come up in quite some time. He feels that it would be a huge disserve to our community in general if COSSA doesn't weigh in it. We are charged to make recommendations to the Governor and legislature. This very serious change in statute and we need to act.

Commissioner Feliciano stated that the Western Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce did a good job of laying out the issues in their statement.

Chairman García stated there are two roads of promoting the ends of accountability. One is to send a message and the other to collect messages already sent. He stated in COSSA sending a message and focusing on the fact this is turning into a political football. Why is this issue being brought up now? Why not last year or five years ago? This is an election year. Is issue being brought up now to get people to vote? The Hispanic community is being exploited and this issue is a politically expedient issue that is going to have desperate impact on our community. We may want to consider how to help the different organizations join their voices into a louder voice against the issue in Michigan. There are many appeals and we don't know how fast it could go to the Supreme Court and be done with swiftly.

Commissioner Guzman asked if the Commission could support the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber's statement resolution instead of us creating our own? Chairman García stated yes he thinks so and this would still fall under COSSA advocating for our community.

Commissioner Reyes stated he feels that's good but he feels it is important that COSSA to come out directly opposing this proposed legislation. This bill has a very direct impact on our community and there has been a lot of movement about it across the state.

Chairman García stated his hesitation is not opposing the bill it is in articulating the reasons for opposing the bill.

Commissioner Rodriguez stated that Commissioners are leaders and here for a reason. She feels that what is going on with this bill is very wrong and history is repeating itself. During the great depression, Detroit should have tripled in population but they lost people.

MOTION: Commissioner Feliciano moved that COSSA compile as much documentation similar to the West Michigan Hispanic Chamber of Commerce resolution and MI Hispanic Bar Association statement and/or any other Hispanic agency statement with their position against the Meltzer Bill and present to the Legislative and Executive Branches. This statement should reflect that under the charter of this Commission in our role to make recommendations to these bodies, there are what the constituents are saying and we strongly agree and support these statements. Commissioner Guzman supported the motion. Motion carried.

Chairman Garcia stated he will complete the drafting of the letter by Wednesday, August 4, 2010 and will publish the draft for comments by Friday, August 6, 2010. The final letter will be mailed by Monday, August 9, 2010.

Chairman García asked Commissioners to forward all agency statements by email to him as soon as possible.

2) MI Hispanic Advocacy Day (MHAD): Director Mason stated that many individuals have expressed to the office that we should hold MHAD at least twice a year. Chairman García discussed the idea of having MHAD but not exactly as we had this year. The idea of combining with Hispanic Heritage Month was discussed. Ms. Mason stated the date of Hispanic Heritage month is important as we need to select a date when legislators can participate. The legislators will be available through September 30th. After that, legislators will be out campaigning for elections. Commissioner Ramirez stated we need to check on school district count days to ensure student participation.

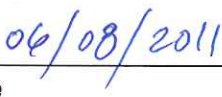
2) Next meeting date and location – Flint, MI - Sept. 10, 2010 (if the SB 215 passes, this meeting will be cancelled)

Adjournment at 11:55 a.m.

Prepared by Commission staff:



Lawrence T. Garcia
Chairperson


Date


Olga Hernandez-Patino
Secretary